

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services

Environmental Health

Issue 20 Spring 1989

THERE'S A TURTLE IN MY TUB

By Sandra Settergren
Day Care Home Licensing Consultant
Washtenaw County

When my eight-year-old nephew comes to visit, he brings some of his favorite toys and some of his favorite siblings. I wasn't quite sure which one of these Jerry was, but I knew that he was here for the duration of the visit. Jerry's virtues had been enumerated so I would welcome him into my apartment. He was said to be clean, quiet and very well mannered. I even heard him described as cute and lovable. I could hardly wait for the introduction.

Justin took my hand and led me into the bathroom to meet this wonderful creature. There sat (stood?) Jerry, staring back at me with those turtle eyes. He had completely taken over my bathtub and still he wasn't happy! He tried to crawl up the side of the tub, but he



kept slipping back. He was clearly much too quiet to be a new sibling and he just didn't look like much of a toy. Those eyes belonged to a real turtle with a shell that must have been at least six inches long.

(Continued on page 2)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Michigan is very fortunate to have had so few serious injuries or fatalities due to environmental factors in centers and homes. I feel this is due in part to the awareness and commitment of conscientious providers who know the importance of prevention.

Creating and maintaining a safe environment that is designed to stimulate children to grow and develop can be challenging. But it has to be one of our most important goals for day care providers. As you know, the day care environment often changes: rooms or furniture are rearranged for different activities; special lessons are prepared; new equipment added. New children come into day care; children begin to push themselves and try out new skills. The key is to design a flexible enriching, healthy environment that protects yet affords children of various ages the opportunity to learn.

On issues related to environmental safety, the Division turns to the Department of Public Health for its expertise. Based on a contractual agreement between the two departments, the Department of Public Health conducts inspections of child care facilities using applicable administrative rules, and the Department of Social Services enforces public health standards in areas like food service, water supply and sewage disposal. For the most part inspections are conducted by local county health department environmental sanitarians. Some are conducted by regional or state sanitarians. A report is sent to your licensing consultant, who reviews it and sends you the results along with any licensing expectations. We encourage providers to wait until they receive official correspondence from the licensing consultant before making any changes. This will help to

(Continued on page 2)

April is
The Month of the
Young Child

Look for local celebrations
in your area.

TURTLE IN MY TUB...

Jerry and I arranged a shower schedule that met everyone's requirements. He agreed to stay in his cage on the balcony as long as I agreed never to lay a hand on him. Justin's mother was the official turtle mover as she was the only one who had both courage and a set of rubber gloves. She said Jerry was a two year old red-eared slider, who came from the pet store with a lot of guarantees that he was a safe and sanitary pet. She believed none of those guarantees and insisted that he always be handled as if he were infectious.

I knew that keeping turtles as pets has been widely discouraged by health department officials. In 1975 the United States Food and Drug Administration banned the domestic sale of small pet turtles to protect the public from disease. Although they can sometimes still be found for sale, they are totally inappropriate and unsafe for your children.

Most turtles and their eggs harbor a bacterial organism called *Salmonella*. This organism can be found in the turtles' tank and waste products. Routine handling of the turtle or just cleaning its tank can cause the handler to come into contact with *Salmonella* bacteria and become infected. *Salmonella* infections produce an illness which is marked by fever, headache, diarrhea, nausea and occasionally vomiting. Young children tend to have more severe symptoms of *Salmonella* infection and may require hospitalization.

Various efforts have been made to treat turtle eggs with special antibiotics to prevent *Salmonella* infections, however, they have not been effective. Even if turtles are advertised as "*Salmonella*-free," it is unlikely that they are safe. Even if they are free of infection after being hatched, they are then "recolonized" with *Salmonella* organisms, often during shipment.

Young children are at the highest risk in handling pet turtles because of their frequent hand to mouth contact. Day care facilities which keep small turtles as children's pets are especially at risk. Once they are infected, children and adults can transmit *Salmonella* to other people.

Even turtles as old and as large as Jerry are inappropriate in day care settings. I can assure you that eight-year-old Justin has a hard time following the turtle handling rules. It would place unrealistic expectations on preschoolers to follow similar rules. The risk is simply too great! Turtles never belong in day care homes or centers. And even though Jerry abided by the shower schedule, I'm still not convinced that turtles belong in my tub.

Resources:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services
18th & C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

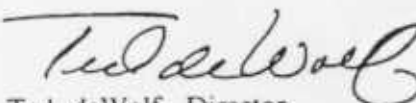
DIRECTOR'S CORNER...

insure that you clearly understand the requirements and avoid unnecessary expense.

For child care centers the environmental sanitarians conduct inspections before new facilities open and at each two year renewal period. They inspect the food service preparation area, the water supply, sewage disposal system, ventilation, equipment safety and other areas covered by administrative rules related to sanitation and environmental health. For family and group day care homes sanitarians routinely inspect only private water and sewage supplies. Licensing consultants may also ask environmental sanitarians to conduct a special investigation when their expertise appears necessary. This may happen when there are outbreaks of communicable diseases, contaminated water sources, gas leaks, or other potential hazards. They have also worked with our Division in developing informational publications and updating rules.

Each child care facility is wonderfully unique, a special place where children can be challenged and develop in a safe environment.

Thank you for all your efforts to make it this way.



Ted deWolf, Director
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

Please send articles for consideration in future issues to:

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A SUMMER SALAD OF FOOD ACTIVITIES

By Marilyn Rudzinski
Extension Home Economist
Macomb County

Summertime provides some real opportunities and challenges in utilizing food in your program. Food can add fun and interest. Whether you consider foods as snacks, meals, or learning experiences, safety and sanitation take a more prominent role with warmer outside temperatures or on picnics and hikes. When planning food activities for summertime, remember to take advantage of the uniqueness of the season; insure health by following appropriate food holding and handling procedures; and involve the children wherever possible.

Summer and fall are the major growing seasons in Michigan. During this time a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables are available in abundance. These products can provide a focus for learning and tasting themes: How are potatoes grown? What do they taste like raw? What other ways do we prepare them? What other foods are in the potato family (yams, rutabagas)? A visit to a farm, or with a farmer, a small garden plot or container gardens could further help children understand how the food they eat is grown and prepared. Following the growth, processing and retailing track of a particular product provides a wealth of materials for field trips, visitors and taste experiences.

The warm weather can also allow us to take advantage of the outdoors. Think of unique places or opportunities outside for food experiences. A sack lunch or snack outside is exciting and breaks the routine. It can also provide the setting for taking us back to pioneer days or to another country.

Keep food hot or keep it cold! This is a wise old adage and very sound advice. Leaving food out in warm weather or at room temperature shortens the safe holding time. Spoilage microorganisms multiply between 40°F and 140°F. Be sure to keep items refrigerated until preparation or serving time and refrigerate as soon as possible after serving. As you place items to cool in the refrigerator, be sure to allow circulation space. A refrigerator thermometer is a good investment. Use it for a quick check to maintain proper temperature. Frequent door openings or overloaded shelves can raise the temperature in your refrigerator.

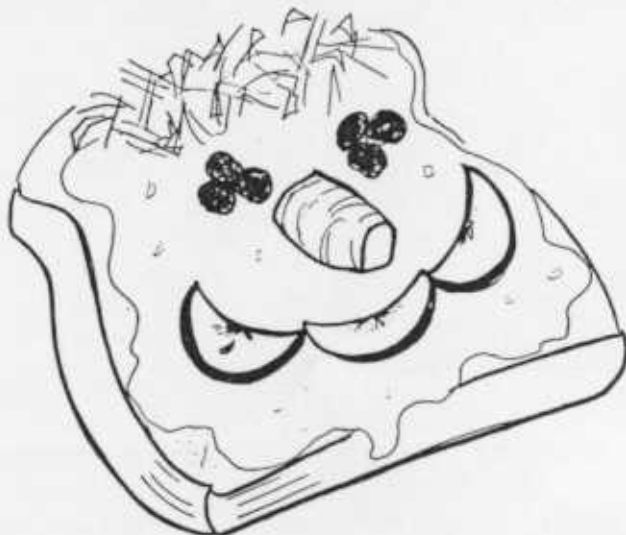
Periodically review personal hygiene. Keep kitchen equipment clean. Wear clean clothing when you prepare foods. Wash your hands frequently and always before handling food. Children learn by doing and by watching you, so make sure you are doing what you want them to learn.

Food activities teach basic living skills. As you plan experiences, snacks and meals, ask yourself if you are allowing the children to help where it is realistically possible. For example, provide a wide variety of vegeta-

bles in large bowls. Let the children use utensils to select items from the bowls to make their individual salads. Fruit kabobs are another do-it-yourself activity. Provide fruit in bowls or individual bags so children can make their own combinations. Both activities encourage decision making, choice and possible exposure to new foods.

The following ideas may get you started:

- **Banana Split Salad** — Slice banana lengthwise. Top with a scoop of cottage cheese. Place fruit cocktail or fresh fruit over the top.
- **Fancy Sandwiches** — Cut bread into shapes with cookie cutters and spread with favorite toppings.
- **Make-A-Face Sandwich** — Cut bread into a circle. Spread with peanut butter. Make "hair" and "eyes" with raisins, carrots, apple slices, coconut, etc.



- **Roll-up Salad** — Spread a lettuce or cabbage leaf with peanut butter. Place a celery or carrot stick in the middle. Roll up the leaf with carrot or celery in center.
- **Treasure Logs** — Roll a thin slice of meat around a cheese slice.

Summer is a happy time. You set the stage. Keep your food times fun and safe.

Resources:

For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service found under county government in the telephone book. Request *Safety Precautions for On Site Quantity Food Preparation (E1708)*; *Availability Guide for Michigan Grown Fruit and Vegetables (E1942)*; *Child Care Business Tips: Safety and Sanitation*.

Michigan Council of
Cooperative Nurseries

SPRING CONFERENCE

May 5-6, 1989

Kellogg Center

Michigan State University

MAKE PLAYGROUNDS SAFER FOR CHILDREN

Reprinted with permission from *Volunteers Voice Newsletter*
National Safety Council.

Regardless of whether it's at school or in your backyard, playground equipment should be installed and maintained correctly. Also, youngsters must be taught and reminded how to use all equipment safely, to prevent injuries.

How to Play Safely

Children will often roughhouse on the playground. This type of behavior, however, is what usually leads to accidents.

Teach children how to use each type of playground equipment by pointing out the following safe play habits to them.

Swings

Children should:

- Sit in the center of the swing — never stand or kneel.
- Hold on with both hands.
- Stop the swing before getting off.
- Walk way around the swing — not too close to the front or back.
- Have one person in one swing at one time.
- Avoid swinging empty swings and never twist swing chains.
- Avoid putting head and feet through exercise rings on the swing sets.



Slides

Children should:

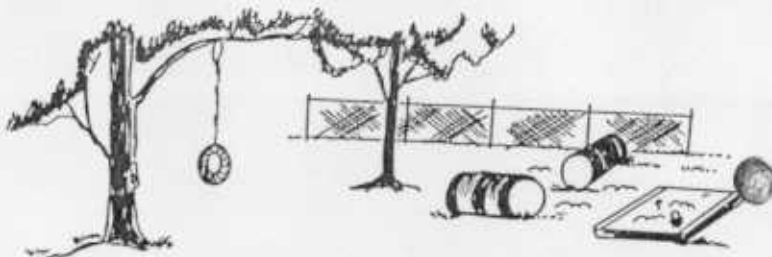
- Hold on with both hands as they go up the steps of the slide, taking one step at a time; never go up the sliding surface or the frame.
- Slide down feet first, always sitting up, one person at a time.
- Be sure no one is in front of the slide before sliding down.
- Be patient, avoid pushing or shoving, and wait their turn.
- Leave the bottom of the slide after they have taken their turn.
- Never use a metal slide that has been sitting in the sun.

Climbing Apparatus

(geodesic domes or arches and jungle gyms)

Children should:

- Use all fingers and thumbs for a good, tight grip.
- Be careful of climbing down and watch for those climbing up.
- Avoid having too many people using the apparatus at one time (horizontal ladders and bars).
- Start at the same end of the apparatus and move in the same direction.



- Stay well behind the person in front and watch out for swinging feet.
- Never use the apparatus when it is wet.
- Don't use metal equipment that has been sitting in the sun.
- Avoid speed contests or trying to cover too large a distance in one move.
- Avoid situations such as hanging from bent knees (upside down).
- Drop from the bars with knees slightly bent and land on both feet.

Seesaws

Children should:



- Sit facing each other.
- Keep a firm hold with both hands.
- Never stand or run on the board.
- Keep feet out from underneath the board as it descends.
- Before dismounting, both children should have their feet on the ground.

Playground Equipment Checklist

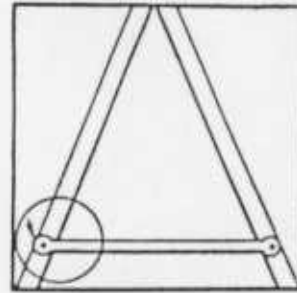
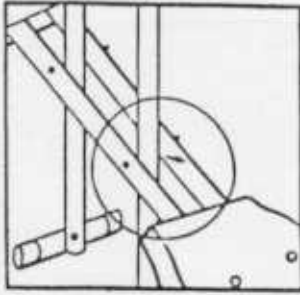
Since adults cannot always be around to assist youngsters with playground safety, it is important to select the right equipment. Here's a checklist for safely setting up backyard play equipment such as swing sets slides and climbing bars.

- Read all assembly instructions before beginning.
- Bend "S" hooks closed so they won't catch on clothes.
- Cap or cut off and tape any and all exposed bolts and screws.
- Tape or file down any rough or sharp areas.
- Anchor equipment legs firmly in concrete or with specially designed anchors.
- All types of anchoring devices should be placed below ground level to avoid a tripping hazard.
- Set the equipment at least 6 feet away from any walkways, fences, walls, sandboxes, trees or other play areas.
- Do not install equipment over hard surfaces such as concrete, brick, blacktop or cinders. Grass or sand is better.
- On home playground equipment, maintenance checks should be made every two weeks: replace rusted and worn or broken parts; oil metal parts; repair as necessary; check wooden equipment for splinters; check landing pits to see if they need refilling.
- Buy the right-sized equipment for the child's age and size.

Be Particularly Aware of These Playground Equipment Dangers

Pinch-Crush Parts

Moving parts particularly on gliders and seesaws can pinch or crush fingers.

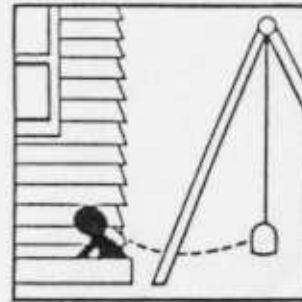
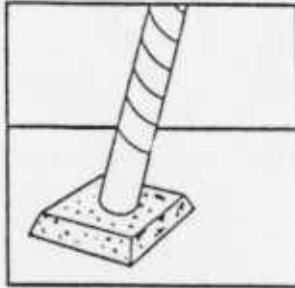


Sharp Edges

Some sets have sharp edges on points where the parts fit together. Tape over these areas with heavy tape and inspect the taped areas regularly for weather damage.

Improper Anchoring

Legs can be set in concrete for stability. All types of anchoring devices should be placed below ground level to avoid a tripping hazard.

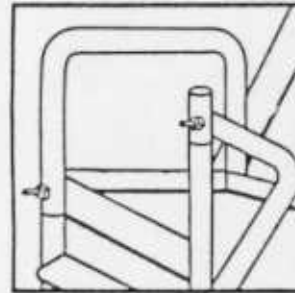
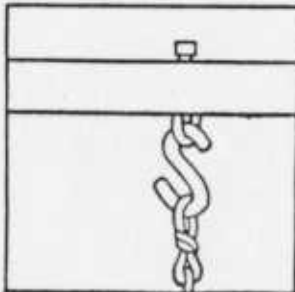


Inadequate Spacing

Install the set a minimum of six feet away from fences, building walls, walkways and other play areas such as sandboxes.

"S" Hooks

Open-ended hooks, especially the "S" hooks on swings which can catch skin or clothing, should be avoided. If a set has such hooks, pinch the ends in tightly with a pair of pliers.

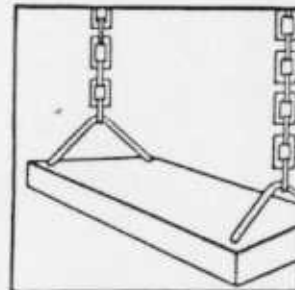
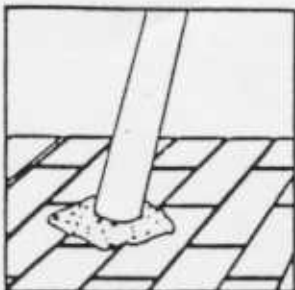


Exposed Screws and Bolts

Most sets include protective caps to cover screws and bolts. When protective caps are not included, tape over all exposed screws and bolts, even those which appear to be out of the child's reach.

Hard Surfaces

Do not install the set over hard surfaces such as concrete, brick, blacktop or cinders. Grass or sand is better.



Hard, Heavy Swing Seats

Hard, heavy swing seats can strike a dangerous blow. Choose a set with lightweight seats or purchase such seats separately and replace the hard seats. Metal seats should have smooth, rolled edges.

WATER PLAY, NOT GERM PLAY

Children everywhere love water and sand play. They are endlessly fascinated with observing the changes in these materials as they fill, dump, pour, and measure. Teachers and caregivers who know how important these activities are for children's development try to make them available everyday. Following these simple guidelines from the Michigan Department of Public Health will help keep your water play from becoming "germ play."

1. Fill the water table with clean water prior to each use; drain it and discard the water after each use. Do not use the same water on more than one day or in more than one session on any day.
2. Wash the basin with detergent and sanitize it with a solution of 1 tablespoon chorine bleach in a gallon of water at the end of each day.
3. Do not use a sanitizing agent (like bleach) in the water children play with.
4. You might use materials other than water (such as clean sand, dried corn, peas, beans, foam packing pellets). If these materials spill on the floor, or become soiled, they should be discarded.
5. Supervise children carefully. Young children are often tempted to drink the water or to put the beans in their mouths. This is not only hazardous to the culprit, but can spread infection to other children if the mouthed materials are returned to the table.
6. When selecting sand for your table, be sure it is

labelled "play sand." Other types of sand intended for industrial use, may contain materials harmful to children.

7. If you use other materials for dumping and pouring, they must be safe and non-toxic. Seeds which have been treated with fertilizer or pesticide for planting are hazardous and should *not* be used.

BON APPETIT

A time-honored custom in many child care programs is to serve snacks which have been prepared in children's homes and brought to the center. Sometimes such snacks are special birthday treats, but many centers use a rotating parent volunteer system to provide all their snacks. When child care programs use foods from home in this way, it is important that they take specific precautions to insure the safety of everyone involved:

1. Never serve home canned foods or foods that have home canned products as an ingredient.
2. When serving potentially hazardous foods, such as meat or dairy products, insure that they are commercially prepared, brought to the center in their original unopened containers, and kept at proper temperatures until serving time.

The Michigan Department of Public Health recommends that snack foods be of the type that require limited preparation.

These articles were compiled by Patricia Hearron based on information provided by the Michigan Department of Public Health.

WHEN THE BEE STINGS

*By Roger Grates, Beekeeper
Saginaw County*

FACT: In the United States, more people die from bee or wasp stings than from snake bites.

Over 2,000 varieties of bees exist in the world. Honey bees will sting if they or their hive is threatened. People in our area are most likely to be stung by yellow jackets or wasps because of their attraction to soft drinks and food humans consume. They are also attracted by cosmetics and perfumes.

The first typical reaction to a sting is an investigation of the afflicted area. If the stinger is still embedded in the skin, the second typical reaction is to pinch the stinger between the thumb and index finger to pull it out of the skin. **THIS IS THE WRONG TECHNIQUE.** The correct method for removing the stinger is to scrape it off with a fingernail or other flat edged objects starting at the base of the stinger.

The reason the stinger should be scraped off is that it is really a subassembly consisting of the stinger, poison sac and muscles surrounding the poison sac. If the stinger is left embedded in the skin, the muscles surrounding the poison sac continue to contract for up to half an hour. If you pinch the stinger and poison sac subassembly to remove it, you are really injecting the venom. Remember, **SCRAPE THE STINGER OFF.**

If the afflicted person starts to show an allergic reaction, get professional help immediately. The reaction may take the form of acute respiratory depression. The individual may turn blue. Temperature may elevate. Severe burning or stinging may take place some distance from the site of the sting. Should the person go into cardiac arrest (this can happen fast in extreme cases), CPR should be administered.

A BURNING ISSUE

Compiled by Carole Grates
Day Care Center Licensing Consultant
Saginaw County

Accidental scalding of children in day care homes and centers is a burning issue. In Michigan, as many as 100 children die every year as a result of scald-related injuries. Countless others receive painful, though non-fatal, burns from scalding.

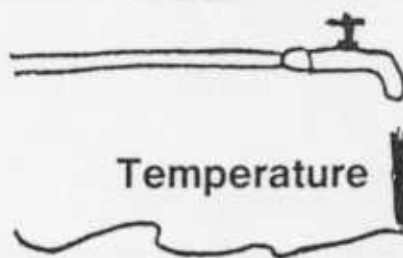
Because a young child's skin is very sensitive to heat, the Michigan Department of Public Health recommends, and child care center rules require, that hot water temperatures not exceed 120°F. In addition, a scalded area of a child represents a larger percentage of skin surface than the same size burn on an adult.

Preventing scalding accidents is simple:

1. Reduce the hot water temperature in your home or center to 120°F by turning down the temperature on the thermostat at the water heater.
2. Never drink hot liquids while holding a child.
3. Keep all cooking and coffee liquids out of reach. Place pots to the back of the stove. If you have to use front burners, turn pot handles inward.

4. Provide protective covers for hot water (steam heat) radiators.

If a burn should occur, immediately immerse the area in cool water to stop the burning process. Avoid ice, vaseline, butter, ointments and any wraps. Do not break water blisters. Seek professional help immediately.



Temperature	Time required to produce a third degree burn
156°	1 Second
149°	2 Seconds
140°	5 Seconds
133°	15 Seconds
127°	50 Seconds
120°	Over 5 Minutes

RESOURCES: HEALTH & SAFETY

Aronson, Susan S., M.D., *Chemical Hazards in Child Care*, Child Care Exchange, September, 1988.

Asbestos in the Home, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Asbestos Exposure in Schools, Committee on Environmental Hazards, American Academy of Pediatrics, February, 1987.

Brooks, Darla, *How to Get Rid of Smelly Bathrooms*, Texas Child Care Quarterly, Summer 1988.

Canavan, Kathryn, *Beware of Faulty Toy Items*, Lansing State Journal, September 15, 1988.

Climatic Heat Stress and the Exercising Child, Committee on Sports Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics, June, 1982.

Communicable Disease in Child Care Settings, Michigan Department of Public Health and Division of Child Day Care Licensing, Michigan Department of Social Services. Available from your consultant.

Corman, Ellen, & Penyan, Diane and Sheer, Ralph, *Kids Aren't Drownproof*, Prevention Update from the National Coalition on Prevention of Mental Retardation, August, 1987.

Heat Stress and School Closing, Committee on School Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, August, 1984.

Home and Family Safety booklets, Channing L. Bete, Co., Inc., 200 State Road, South Deerfield, MA 01373. Toll free number 1-800-628-7733.

Home Sewage Disposal, Michigan Environmental Health Association, 1979.

Johansen, Marvin G., *Recommended Hand Washing, Toileting and Cleaning Procedures at Child Care Centers*, Division of Environmental Health, Michigan Department of Public Health, August, 1985.

Kolanowski, Kenneth, *Child Care Centers — Their Environment*, EOH Focus, Michigan Department of Public Health, Summer 1987.

Merry Christmas with Safety, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207. Toll free number 1-800-638-2666.

Nitrates in Drinking Water, A Public Health Problem, Michigan Department of Public Health.

Revised First Aid for the Choking Child, Committee on Accident and Poison Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, July, 1986.

Statement on Childhood Lead Poisoning, Committees on Environmental Hazards and Accident and Poison Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, March, 1987.

Trampolines II, American Academy of Pediatrics, March, 1981.

PROVIDER'S CORNER



By Sandra Settergren, Licensing Consultant
Washtenaw County

The League of Women Voters of Michigan has prepared an excellent pamphlet called *Juggling A Job and Johnny*. It is a guide to the low income day care payment program, administered by the Department of Social Services, which explains how the program works. It is available from the League of Women Voters of Michigan, 200 Museum Drive, Suite 202, Lansing, Michigan 48933-1997. You may also obtain it by calling their Citizen Information Center in Lansing at 484-3086 or the toll free number 1-800-292-5823.

This pamphlet goes on to explain that "DSS payments are based on a 'unit' concept (rather than per hour). Payment can only be made for 2 units in a 24 hour period. If between 1 and 5 hours of care are needed in a day, payment is made for 1 unit. If care is needed for any period of more than 5 hours in a 24 hours period, the maximum 2 units of payment can be made." For example, if 2 hours of care are given by a

day care home, DSS will allow 1 unit of payment: \$3.40 (see chart below). If 4 hours of care are given, the DSS payment is still \$3.40. If the amount of care given in the home is more than 5 hours a day, payment will be made for 2 units, or \$6.80. Whether the care is for 6 hours or 16 hours, the DSS payment to the home will still be \$6.80. DSS will also evaluate the parents' income to determine what percentage of this \$3.40 or \$6.80 DSS can pay. The payment is made directly to the day care provider unless that care is provided by an aide in the child's home.

DSS Payments for Low Income Day Care Each Unit — Maximum of Two Units Per Day

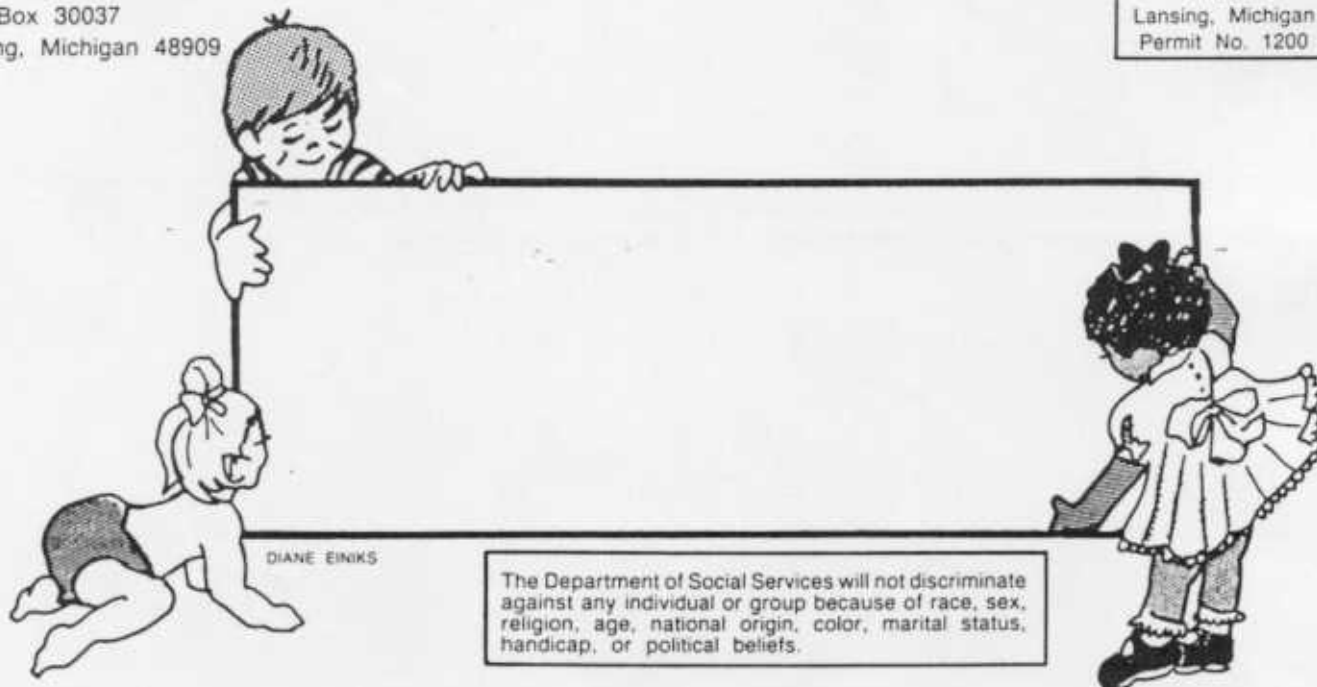
Day Care Aides (in the child's home)	\$2.59
Day Care Homes	\$3.40
Day Care Centers	
Age 2 weeks to 2½ years	\$6.48
Age 2½ years and up	\$4.31

The League of Women Voters pamphlet used an example of a single mother with one child in a day care home for 9 hours a day, 5 days a week. The DSS payment allowed is \$6.80 per day or \$68.00 in a bi-weekly period.

If you have any day care parents who you think might be eligible for a DSS payment, you may want to suggest that they call their local DSS office and ask to speak to a day care payments worker.

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